

(b) the details of States which have set up such committees and have started the process of withdrawing such cases; and

(c) the number of cases withdrawn as a result thereof during the last year, State/ Union Territory-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (c) During the Joint Conference of Chief Ministers of States and Chief Justices of High Courts held at New Delhi in April 2015, reduction of pendency and backlog of cases in courts emerged as an area which required focused attention at the High Court level. The Chief Justices of High Courts in the Conference held on 03rd and 04th April 2015 have resolved that each High Court shall establish an Arrears Committee, which would go into the factors responsible for the delays and prepare an action plan to clear the backlog of cases pending for more than five years. As per information available, all High Courts have set up Arrears Committees. The Supreme Court has also constituted an Arrears Committee consisting of two Hon'ble Judges to formulate steps to reduce pendency of cases in High Courts and District Courts. Data on disposal and pendency of cases in courts is maintained by the Supreme Court and High Courts. There is no mandate for the Arrears Committees to suggest withdrawal of cases.

Shortage of judicial officers in Subordinate Judiciary

2987. SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases in the lower judiciary in the country, pending trial and judgment, and since when;

(b) whether it is a fact that the primary reason of pendency of cases is large scale vacancies of judicial officers in the Subordinate judiciary, if so, the number thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to conduct centralised examination to select judges timely, if so, the opinion of the Supreme Court in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) Data on pendency of cases is maintained by the Supreme Court and the High Courts. As per the information furnished by High Courts, 2.74 crore cases were pending in various District and Subordinate Courts as on 31.12.2016, out of which 1.38 crore (50.35%) cases were less than two years old, 72.16 lakh (26.24%) cases were two to five years old, 43 lakh (15.64%) cases were five to ten years old and 21.35 lakh (7.77%) cases were more than ten years old.

(b) Increasing number of state and central legislations, accumulation of first appeals, continuation of ordinary civil jurisdiction in some of the High Courts, vacancies of Judges, appeals against orders of quasi-judicial forums going to High Courts, number of revisions/appeals, adjournments, indiscriminate use of writ jurisdiction, lack of adequate arrangement to monitor, track and bunch cases for hearing are some of the main factors responsible for pendency of cases in courts. The appointment of Judges and Judicial Officers in the District and Subordinate Courts falls within the domain of the High Courts and State Governments concerned. As per the information made available by the High Courts, 5875 posts of Judges/Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts were vacant as on 31.12.2016.

(c) The appointment of Judges and Judicial Officers in the District and Subordinate Courts falls within the domain of the High Courts and State Governments concerned in which the Central Government has no role. However, in order to facilitate regular filling up of these vacancies in a smooth and time-bound manner, the Department of Justice *vide* its letter dated 28th April, 2017 suggested certain options to the Hon'ble Supreme Court for creation and operation of the Central Selection Mechanism. The Hon'ble Supreme Court *suo motu* converted the Government's letter dated 28th April, 2017 into a writ petition on 09th May, 2017 and directed all State Governments (including Union Territories) to file their responses and suggestions by way of affidavits. The above matter is *subjudice* at present.

Safety of Unmanned Level Crossings

2988. SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a system has been devised for the safety of unmanned level crossings, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) by when the process will be in operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) Following two trial projects are in progress:

- (i) Development and implementation of Satellite based system for warning at unmanned level crossing gates of Indian Railways has been undertaken by Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO)/Ministry of Railways and Space Applications Centre/Indian Space Research Organisation (SAC/ISRO).
- (ii) Development and implementation of a "Suitable and Viable Vandal-Proof Advance Warning System" (Radio and Radio Frequency Identification based) to Pre-warn road users against approaching train at unmanned level crossing